1855MNRAS..15...89H

On an Appearance seen in the Moon. By Robert Hart, Esq.

(*Letter to the Astronomer Royal.*)

"On the night of the 27th December, 1854, between 6 and 7 P.M., the moon was very bright. I had brought my 10-inch reflector to bear upon the moon; on the shaded side of the disk I observed a white spot, where I have marked it on the sketch. As it was of the colour of the light of the moon, and not like star-light, I thought it part of the moon; but as it disappeared in less than a minute after I first observed it, I concluded it was a star eclipsed by the moon.* I now turned my attention to the light part of the disk, and my eye was at once attracted by an appearance I had never seen before on the surface of the moon, although I have observed her often during these last forty years. She was $8^d\ 4^h$ old at the time, and just on the edge of the light, where I have marked on the sketch, there were *two luminous spots*, one on either side of a small ridge, *which ridge was in the light*, and of the same colour as the moon; but these spots were of *a yellow flame colour*, while all the rest of the enlightened part was of a snowy white, and the mountain-tops that were coming into the light, *and just on the shadow side of these spots, were of the same colour as the moon.* The lights of these spots were *like the light of the setting sun reflected from a window a mile or two off.* I observed it for five hours. I thought them rather less bright than as first seen, *but very little less;* so bright were they, when the instrument was the least thing out of focus, they showed *rays around them as a star would do.*

"As I live about two miles out of Glasgow, I had no scientific friend with me at the time, but I called the attention of three gentlemen, my neighbours, and my own household, and they all described the appearance as I saw it myself, and have given above.

"I would have followed it longer had I been able, but the wind was very cold, $20^\circ\cdot5$, and I had no shelter, as I take my telescope outside. I left off about 12 P.M.; and from the cloudy weather, I never saw the moon until she was nearly full, then only a few minutes, and again on the 10th January, at 4 A.M.; but the haze was too thick. I thought I might see them in the shade, but I could not: I have never seen her since.

"May I ask the favour of your laying this before the Astronomical Society, that we might learn if any of the members have observed this appearance in the moon, or have heard that it was seen by others. I shall be happy to learn if it has been taken notice of by any other observer, and their opinion of it.

"It appeared to me, from the brightness of the light and the contrast of colour, *to be two active volcanoes or two mouths of one in action.*

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* This was, no doubt, the occultation of μ *Piscium*, which, according to the *Nautical Almanac*, was in conjunction with the moon at $6^h\ 54^m\ 10^s$, on the evening of December 27, 1854.—EDITOR.

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"If there was no star eclipsed by the moon at or about 7 P.M. that night, the white spot that was more like one of the mountain-tops tipped with light than a star, may have had some connexion with it.

"*Cessnock Park, January 15th,* 1855."

Discovery of a New Comet (*Comet I.* 1855).

By M. Winnecke.

On the morning of the 15th of January, M. Winnecke discovered at Berlin, in the vicinity of γ *Hydræ*, a faint granulous nebula, the estimated position of which was,—

Jan. 14, 18^h	$225° 20'$	$-27° 11'$

On the next morning it was found to have shifted its place. The following observation of its position was obtained by the discoverer and M. Bruhns:—

	Berlin M.T. h m s	R.A. ° ′ ″	Decl. ° ′ ″
Jan. 15	18 4 16·2	226 5 15·4	−27 15 5·3

Apparent place of the star of comparison,—

	R.A. ° ′ ″	Decl. ° ′ ″
Argel Z 373, No. 57	226 38 16	−27 18 42·4

The daily motion is consequently,—

	′
In R.A. about	+45
Dec. —	− 4′

The comet has also been discovered independently by M. Dien, at the Imperial Observatory, Paris.

M. Bruhns has calculated an ephemeris of the comet, extending from Jan. 14 to Feb. 17, printed copies of which have been circulated by M. Peters, the editor of the *Astronomische Nachrichten.*

The weather has hitherto been very unfavourable for observing this comet in England.

On the Orbit of the Binary Star σ *Coronæ Borealis.*

By Eyre B. Powell, Esq.

"Three orbits have been already arrived at for this star, viz. that computed by Sir John Herschel, and the approximately inter-accordant ones of Messrs. Hind and Mädler; it may, therefore, appear, at first sight, a work of supererogation to investigate a fresh set of elements. The startling difference, however, that exists between Sir J. Herschel's orbit and the other two, will,

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